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MICHEL STROGOFF AGAIN.*

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—I regret that matters of importance compelled me to overlook temporarily the interesting rejoinder of Professor Lewis to my review of his edition of Verne's *Michel Strogoff*.¹

I think I can show, to borrow the words of Gaston Paris,² that the editor has written "avec une vivacité qui, pour prendre volontiers une forme discrètement ironique, n'en est pas moins sensible."

Dr. Lewis thanks me for the review and then proceeds to correct "one or two suggestions" made therein. I propose to examine his corrections: "In such words as *complètement*," he remarks, "I retain Verne's spelling, for he often uses an acute accent over the *e* immediately preceding a mute *e*." What does Dr. Lewis mean? How "often" and where does Verne write an acute accent when other French writers use the grave? The Academy has been writing "*complètement*" since 1878,³ and it would seem strange that Verne has not fallen in line. The editor cites no examples to support his statement.—The word "*très*" does not occur in my review.—Dr. Lewis "thought" students would understand the reference to "Delaware;" but mine did not understand it. He further remarks: "Podaroshna is explained, *I think*, in the course of the text." So it is, undoubtedly; but the explanation (p. 18, l. 29) occurs just three pages beyond the first occurrence of the word (p. 15, l. 25).—Now as to "tarentass" and "télègue:" I remarked simply that these words are not translated; their meanings are not differentiated.

In the English 'argument' on page 23 of the text, Dr. Lewis states that a "tarentass" is a Russian carriage, and he there also alludes to a "vehicle" preceding the "tarentass" in question. On page 24 of the text, Strogoff wonders who the travelers can be "*dont la télègue précédait son tarentass.*" Right here

* This correspondence was received before that of Professor Garner was published in our last issue.

¹ See MOD. LANG. NOTES for May, 1895, vol. x, 300-308.

² In his criticism of Jeanroy's *Origines de la Poésie Lyrique*.

³ Hatzfeld et Darmesteter, *Dict. de la langue franç., s. v.*

the intelligent student looks in the notes to find the difference—if any there be—between "tarentass" and "télègue." The expected note is lacking, as I stated in my review, and not until the word "télègue" occurs again ten pages in advance of this point, are we told (p. 36, note) that the two vehicles are "two varieties of Russian vehicles." The word "iemschik" occurs first in line 6 of page 25, and it is in a note to line 6 page 25, that the student has a right to expect an explanation of the term. None is given. As in the case of "podaroshna," "télègue" and "tarentass," the desired information is given for the first time in a note to a subsequent page of the text.—I still think the note to "pour qui" too vague to be of service to the student, and the fact that Dr. Lewis "rather likes" the term "neuter pronoun" has no bearing on my observation that a reference to the grammar is here lacking.

I am quite aware that literal translation can be carried too far; I hardly thought it necessary to insist that a "cheval de fond" is a horse of good bottom, a horse that has wind and endurance, and not a dancing horse, for example, although such beasts are to be found, I believe, and we cannot deny that they have "good qualities."

Again, it is scarcely necessary for the editor to state anew so many accepted facts about the word *tout*; nor can I agree with the statement that "in an elementary text-book such niceties of spelling need not be considered, and especially as they are not mentioned in such a work as Whitney's large French grammar." That Whitney does not mention niceties of spelling is no proof that they—to keep the plural—are not desirable.

But it is the hypothesis with which Dr. Lewis begins the last paragraph of his "correspondence" that seems especially to demand examination. It appears that the editor read "whatever material he could find on Verne's life;" that he "was rather amused at three statements contained in generally reliable works;" and that his "amusement was caused by the wide difference of opinion on the birth and life of an author so well known as Jules Verne." "So" he continues, "I quoted these three statements." But when

the editor quotes a journal which distinctly states that Verne is a pen-name, he should surely mention that the quoted statement is contrary to fact. He writes in a note: "So far as I know at present" the statement in Johnson's *Cyclopædia* is correct. Why did he not state *definitely* which of his three conflicting sources contained facts? His note (quoted later) left me in doubt as to the nationality of Verne, for the note shows clearly that the editor was uncertain at the time of writing. In order to settle the point of nationality for my pupils I consulted various dictionaries of pseudonyms and wrote to M. Verne. The fact that the author was "not mentioned" in those dictionaries of pseudonyms dispelled doubts raised by the editor, and M. Verne's pleasant letter⁴ is evidence enough that "the dictionaries and catalogues cited by Mr. Symington" are not his only sources for the biography of contemporaries.

Dr. Lewis closes his rejoinder with irony which would perhaps be more effective if its point did not lie in the fact that my printed statement was misquoted. Surely he must have seen the importance of the bracketed numerals in my sentence "this (1828) is the correct statement," and yet he quotes the sentence, but omits the date!

Dr. Lewis thinks that when my remarks are compared with his biographical note most editors will agree with him "in thinking that such criticism is more careless, to say the least" than his note appears. Perhaps it will be well to quote, without omission, that part—the only part—of the Biographical Note in which allusion is made to the birth and nationality of Verne.

[BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.]

The material already in existence for Jules Verne's life is most meagre and contradictory. In the *Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica* (iv, p. 734), for example, we read that he was born at *Nantes* on the 8th of February, 1814. According to Johnson's *New Universal Cyclopædia* (iv, p. 1137) he was born at *Nantes* on the 8th of February, 1828.⁵ *The Dial* (xiv, p. 239), on the other hand, has the following quotation from the London *Literary World*: "Though the literary world does not seem to know it, 'Jules Verne' is only

a pen-name. The novelist is by birth a Pole—a native of *Warsaw*—and his real name is Olchewitz. When he began to write he adopted the expedient of translating the initial syllable of his family patronymic (which in English means 'beach') into its French equivalent, and in this way he got 'Verne'."

The estimates of the value of his works apparently differ to a like degree.

⁵ So far as I know at present, this is the correct statement].

W. STUART SYMINGTON.

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THE NOVEL AND THE STORY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—The criticism passed by Dr. Deering, in your November number, on my attempt to distinguish the novel from the story seems to me to be well-founded in theory and justified by facts; for instance, in the case of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which had occasioned me considerable perplexity. My own differentiation between the two had never been satisfactory to me, but intent only on tracing the one kind, I neglected to look into the essence of the other. Since Dr. Deering privately brought the matter to my attention some months ago, I have had no opportunity to test historically his definition of the story; nor is there in Cleveland sufficient material available for the purpose. But some questions arose while I was reading mediæval literature with the origin of the novel chiefly in view, which may be worth while to state.

One noticeable feature of the literature which tended to make up the romance of chivalry—the epic literature, roughly speaking—is that it was not used to any great extent by the later story-tellers. Even the *romans d'aventure*, which, in many cases, require but a prose form to make them excellent stories, are hardly ever drawn upon—so far at least as known manuscripts indicate. Indeed there would seem to be an almost conscious avoidance of the domain of the novel by the partisans of its lighter rival. The conclusion would be then that the ancestor of the story is not the same as the progenitor of the novel, and therefore that the essential difference between the novel and the story is inherited from a previous stage of existence, the poetical stage. This conclusion may be arbitrary, depending

⁴ Published M. L. N., x, 305.